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An Experienced Orange Grower's Views.

McMEERIN, Fla., Feb. 1 1886.

EDITOR PALATKA NEWS:

The great freeze of Florida has left its mark on the orange trees and other trees of the citrus family very plainly. It is to be hoped that its lessons will not be without benefit to the reflecting orange grower.

The damage done to the orange trees through this section generally is the loss of their leaves and some of the twigs of last seasons growth, now and then a small scion will die root and branch and some of the buds put in last year may be lost. This seems to be about the extent of the damage to the orange trees here. The writer is one of those who do not expect a full crop of oranges this season. If there is a full crop the orange growers should be very thankful.

The freeze has taught us what extreme cold the orange trees can stand. It has taught us that vigorous trees will stand more cold than feeble trees and another valuable lesson is that it is not wise to leave so large a portion of the fruit on the trees to risk the winter for high prices.

The writer has long been of the opinion that the fruit might be gathered in December after it is fully ripe and stored in a cold storage warehouse, in which it could be perfectly preserved for months and from which it could be shipped as required by the demand, there keeping the oranges till May or June and possibly later. There is a fine field open here for capital. These cold storage houses would work well in connection with the ice factories. There is a growing demand for ice throughout the state and therefore ice manufacturing is likely to pay without connection with the cold storage, but much better with it. Florida has reached in her production of oranges about 1,000,000 boxes. Now it is reasonable to assume that half of this would go into cold storage. If there was sufficient and convenient storage on transportation lines. An average of 50 cents per box is also a reasonable assumption, which would amount to the handsome sum of \$500,000 to the cold storage men, and would result to fully that much or more in profit to the growers.

If meats and fish and fruits more perishable than oranges can be kept sound by cold storage why not oranges? It might be a question as to whether the cold storage houses are in Florida or in the cities in the vicinities of the purchasers and consumers. But the writer believes that they should be in the vicinity of the growers and shipped as demanded by the market. Whatever may be the proper locality there can be little doubt about their benefits in keeping oranges in cold storage houses for high prices than prevail in the midst of orange seasons. And should this, the greatest of Florida's freezes, result in establishing these houses, then indeed it was a great blessing instead of a calamity.

This cold has also taught that wind breaks are valuable and efficient protection in cold snaps accompanied with wind.

There is an instance in this neighborhood of tender orange scions so preserved by being located on the east side of a house, the side opposite to the direction of the wind, that they look as green and fresh as if there had been no freeze. It teaches that camphor trees will never be hurt by cold in Florida. The writer has two about ten feet high, and if possible they are of a more beautiful dark green than before the freeze, yet were fully exposed to the wind and had no protection whatever.

The lessons of this freeze are many. Let us endeavor to profit by them. There is certainly no cause for despondency.

Orange growers can enter on the cultivation of the orange with more confidence in its capacity to resist any cold that is likely to visit their location, and by gathering the fruit in December, they will never lose any by cold again. At this point the writer would suggest that the true system of marketing the orange is to sell to the fruit dealers at the place of shipment, or at the grove. Selling on commission is not the right way and so long as it is followed the prices will be low and unsatisfactory. If fruit dealers learn they can make money by buying of the grower or in Florida, they will not be long about pursuing that course. The grower can sell to them at such rates without injury to the grower as will ensure this. Therefore let the growers advertise for the trade, and then deal so as to make it to the interest of the fruit dealer to purchase from them and this thing is settled for all time and it will prove beneficial both to the grower and commissioner.

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